1:Gordon E-4, 9 (no date) 1907 AR? Khasi AR?

district. The Lyngams inhabit the western portion of the Khasi Hills proper. A line drawn north and south through the village of Nongstoin may be said to form their eastern boundary, and the Kamrup and Sylhet districts their northern and southern boundaries, respectively. The people known as *Bhois* in these hills, who are many of them really Mikirs, live in the low hills to the north and north-east of the district, the term "Bhoi" being a territorial name rather than tribal. The eastern boundary of the Lyngam country may be said to form their north-western boundary. The Wars inhabit the precipitous slopes and deep valleys to the south of the district. Their country extends along the entire southern boundary of the district to the *Jaintiahs*, or Kanchi-ang, river where the Lyngam territory may be said to commence towards the south. There are some Hadem colonies in the extreme eastern portions of the Jaintia Hills. It is these colonies which are sometimes referred to by other writers as "Kuki Colonies." They are settlers from the North Cachar Subdivision of the Cachar district within recent years. It is possible that the title Hadem may have some connection with *Hidimdesh*, the ancient name for the North Cachar Hills.

APPEARANCE

The colour of the Khasi skin may be described as being usually brown, varying from dark to a light yellowish brown, according to locality. The complexion of the people who inhabit the uplands is of a somewhat lighter shade, and many of the women, especially those who live at Nongkrem, Laitlyngkot, Mawphlang, and other villages of the surrounding high plateaux, possess that pretty gipsy complexion that is seen in the South of Europe amongst the peasants. The people of Cherrapunji village are especially fair. The Syntengs of the Jaintia Hills are darker than the Khasi uplanders. The Wars who live in the low valleys are frequently more swarthy than the Khasis. The Bhois have the sallow-looking yellow skin of the Mikirs, and the Lyngams are darker than the Khasis. The Lyngams are probably the darkest complexioned people in the

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A GROUP OF KHASI COOLIES.

Reproduced from a sketch by the late Colonel Woodthorpe, R.E.

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142 hills, and if one met them in the plains one would not be able to distinguish them from the ordinary Kashari or Bahbu. The nose in the Khasi is somewhat depressed, the nostrils being often large and prominent. The forehead is broad and the 141 space between the eyes is often considerable. The skull may be said to be almost brachy-cephalic, the average cephalic index of 77 Khasi subjects, measured by Col. Waddell and Major Hare, I.M.S., being as high as 77·3 and 77·9, respectively. According to these data the Khasis are more brachy-cephalic than the Aryans, whose measurements appear in Crooke's tables, more brachy-cephalic than the 100 Mundas whose measurements appear in Risley's tables, more brachy-cephalic than the Dravidians, but less brachy-cephalic than the Burmans, whose measurements also appear in Crooke's tables. It would be interesting to compare some head measurements of Khasis with Japanese, but unfortunately the necessary data are not available in the case of the latter people. The Khasi head 142 may be styled sub-brachy-cephalic. Eyes are of medium size, in colour black or brown. In the Jaintia Hills hazel eyes are not uncommon, especially amongst females. Eyelids are somewhat obliquely set, but not so acutely as in the Chinese and some other Mongols. Jaws frequently are prognathous, mouth large, with sometimes rather thick lips. Hair black, straight, and 302 worn long, the hair of people who adopt the old style being caught up in a knot at the back. Some males cut the hair short with the exception of a single lock at the back, which is called *u sinkhrong* or *u nish-" iawbei* (i.e. the grandmother's lock.) The forepart of the head is often shaven. It is quite the exception to see a beard, although the moustache is not infrequently worn. The Lyngams pull out the hairs of the moustache with the exception of a few hairs on either side of the upper lip.

PHYSICAL AND GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

142. The Khasis are usually short in stature, with bodies well [147] nourished and the males are extremely muscular. The trunk is long in proportion to the rest of the body, and broad at the waist; calves are very highly developed. The women when

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BRASS CHILD

Reproduced from a picture by Miss Emma Scott O'Connor

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1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 ART Khasi ART

young are comely, of a Iranian type, and, like the men, with highly-developed calves, the latter always being considered a beauty. The children are frequently remarkably pretty. Khasis carry very heavy burdens, it being the custom for the lords of the country to carry a maund, or 82 lbs. weight, or even more occasionally, on his back, the load being fixed by means of a cane band which is worn across the forehead; women carry almost as heavy loads as the men. The coolies, both male and female, commonly do the journey between Cherrapunji and Shilling, or between Shilling and Jowai, in one day, carrying the heavy loads above mentioned. Each of the above journeys is some thirty miles. They carry their great loads of rice and salt from Therria to Cherrapunji, an ascent of about 4,000 feet in some three to four miles, in the day. The Khasis are probably the best porters in the north of India, and have frequently been requisitioned for transport purposes on military expeditions.

The people are cheerful in disposition, and are light-hearted by nature, and, unlike the plains people, seem to thoroughly appreciate a joke. It is pleasant to hear on the road down to Theriaghat from Cherrapunji, in the early morning the whole hillside resounding with the snatch of song and peals of laughter of the coolies, as they run nimbly down the short cuts on their way to market. The women are specially cheerful, and pass the time of day and handy jokes with passers-by with quite an absence of reserve. The Khasis are certainly more industrious than the Assamese, are generally good-tempered, but are occasionally prone to sudden outbursts of anger, accompanied by violence. They are fond of music, and rapidly learn the hymn tunes which are taught them by the Welsh missionaries. Khasis are devoted to their offspring and the women make excellent nurses for European children, frequently becoming much attached to their little charges. The people, like the Japanese, are fond of nature. A Khasi loves a day out in the woods, where he thoroughly enjoys himself. If he does not go out shooting or fishing, he is content to sit still and contemplate nature. He has a separate name for each of the commoner birds and flowers. He also has names for many butterflies and moths. These are traits which are not found usually in the people of India.

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or difference. It is owing to these three different names being used for the same people that there has been so much confusion about Lyngams previously; e.g. at one census they were named *Lyngam*, at another they received the appellation of Garo, and at a third enumeration they were called Khasis. In Section I. the habitat of the Lyngams has been roughly defined. It is impossible to define the Lyngam country exactly, because these people are continually shifting their villages also owing to the exigencies of jhum cultivation, which has been described in Section II. Some of the Lyngams preserve a tradition that they originally came from the Kamrup plains. It is interesting that a people, like the Garos in so many respects, should have the same idea as the Garos as to the hills on the south bank of the Brahmaputra not always having been their abode. The Garo legend is that they dwelt for some years in the Goalpara and Kamrup plains after they descended from Thibet, and before they moved to the Garo Hills; and there is unmistakable evidence of their occupation of both districts in the shape of certain Garo villages on both banks of the Brahmaputra for some little distance up the river. If, as I suspect, the Lyngams are an offshoot of the Garos, it is, perhaps, possible that they entered the Khasi Hills much in the same way as the Garos entered the hill district to which they have given their name. The Lyngams are much darker than the Khasis, and possess the Thibeto-Burman type of feature often to a marked degree. It is not extraordinary that they should have adopted some of the Khasi customs, for the Khasis, being the stronger people, would in course of time be bound to influence them in this respect. That the Lyngams observe the matriarchate and erect (some class) memorial stones is not peculiar, because the Garos, like the Khasis, are also a matriarchal people (to a limited degree), and the custom of erecting memorial stones is not confined to the Khasis, for other hill tribes in Assam observe the practice, e.g. certain Naga tribes and the Mikirs; and the Garos themselves put up carved posts, called *kima*, in honour of the departed. Although there is not much intermarriage between the Khasis and the Lyngams nowadays, perhaps in days gone by there was a mixture of blood, the result being the hybrid race we are now

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U DAKHU, LYNNGAM HEAD MAN.

Reproduced from a picture by Miss Kirree Scott O'Connor.

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considering. Some of the leading characteristics of the Lyngams will now be detailed. The Lyngams are by complexion swarthy, with features of Mongolian type. The men are of middle height and the women remarkably short, both sexes being not nearly so robust as the Khasis, a result due probably to climatic influences, for the Lyngams live in fever-haunted jungles. The men have very little hair about the face, although a scanty moustache is sometimes seen, the hairs in the centre being carefully plucked out, the result being two tufts on either side. Beards are never seen. The women are ill-favoured, and wear very little clothing. The men wear the shoveless coat of the Khasi and Mikir pattern, called *phong-mawng*, which is made of cotton dyed red, blue, and white. This custom may have been borrowed from the Khasis. They do not grow their own cotton, but obtain it from the plains. They make their own dyes, *shangling* (red) and *kar sni-ieng* (black). A cotton cloth, barely enough for purposes of decency, is tied between the legs, the ends being allowed to hang down in front and behind. Sometimes an apron is worn in front. At the present day the men wear knitted woollen caps, generally black or red, of the Nongstoin pattern (a sort of fisherman's cap), but the elderly men and head-men wear turbans. The females wear a cotton cloth about eighteen inches broad round the loins, sometimes striped red and blue, but more often only dark blue. A blue or red cloth is thrown loosely across the shoulders by unmarried girls, but married women only wear the waist-cloth, like the Garos. A cloth is tied round the head by married women, sometimes Garo fashion. The women wear quantities of blue beads as necklaces, like their Garo sisters. They obtain the beads from the Garo markets at the foot of the hills. Brass ear-rings are worn by both sexes; the women, like the Garos, load their ears to such an extent with brass rings as to distend the holes greatly. Silver armlets are worn by the head-men only, or by those who possess the means to give a great feast to the villagers. This is the custom of the Garo *nokmas*, or head-men. Both sexes wear bracelets. The men also wear necklaces of beads. The rich wear necklaces of cornelian and another stone which is thought by the Lyngams to be valuable. A necklace of such stones is called *u'pieng blei* (god's necklace).

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No. 4.—1904.

101 *Note on the Khasis, Syntengs, and allied Tribes, inhabiting the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District in Assam.*—By Major P. R. T. Gurdon, *Superintendent of Ethnography in Assam.* (With plates III—IV).

[Read 3rd August, 1904.]

142 1. *Physical characteristics.*—The men are seldom tall; they are generally well made, and possess great strength of limb,—*of leg in particular.* Their features show a resemblance to those of the Japanese; their complexions are fair, noses flat, lips thick, and eyes very frequently obliquely set. The women are good-looking, of a buxom type, and are cheerful and pleasant-mannered. Children are sometimes exceedingly pretty. Khasis are inveterate chewers of *pán*,—both men, women, and children; the distances from place to place being measured by the number of betel-nuts that can be chewed on the journey. The hair of the males is shaved above the forehead pretty high up, and the remainder is gathered into a knot at the back of the head. Very few 291 Khasis have much hair about the face. Both Khasis and Syntengs wear the sleeveless coat (*Ijymphong*) loin-cloth, *jain sliang* (a kind of

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from October to December. For winter rice seed is sown in April-May and reaped about six months later. Maize is usually sown in April-May and reaped in August - September. For potato, generally three crops are raised in the district ; the first is sown in December-January and harvested in April-May, the second is sown in February-March and is gathered in June-July and the third is sown in July-August and is harvested in November-December.

For oranges and betelnut the orchards are cleared of weeds twice a year. Harvesting of oranges takes place from October to January. Betelnut ripens at the beginning of the year and are collected between February and May.

2.6.3 Agricultural implements.—The usual agricultural implements are a hoe, a sickle, three or four kinds of dao, a harrow, a crowbar which is used for the construction of irrigation channels, 'Gamar' and winnowing baskets. Bullock drawn plough is used in wet paddy cultivation in parts of Jowai subdivision and in Shillong area and ploughing the soil is in use in the plains of the State.

2. 6. 4. General cultural practices.—The cultivators mostly adhere to their indigenous practices of cultivation. Rotation of crops is not widely used. Cultivation of rice is usually done by broadcasting the seeds though transplanting is also in vogue in some areas. Mixed cropping is widely practised. Cultivation by making terraces in the hill slopes is growing popularity in the district.

2.7 Cottage Industries.—Cottage Industries, it appears, have not found very great favour among the people of the district. A few families here and there manufacture iron implements, earthenware, mirrors, baskets, mats and jewellery. In making contrast with other districts weaving of cotton clothes is rare among the Khasis. The Mikirs in Jhoi area and in areas adjoining North Cachar and Mikir Hills practise it only for their domestic consumption. At present, the Government is trying to popularise weaving in the district and this has been welcomed by the Khasis. Among other cottage industries production of art cotton in the northern part of the district adjoining Kamrup district and bee keeping throughout the district are worth mentioning.

2.8 The People.—The Khasis and Jaintias are a short sturdy race distinct from the neighbouring hill tribes. By nature they are hardy and laborious and in respect of manual labour, they are free from any inhibitions. Side by side with the Khasis live the Mikirs, Garos and Nepalis who form respectively 2.32 percent, 1.38 percent and 7.27 per cent of the total rural population. Besides, there are plains people who are mainly concentrated in the town of Shillong. In the marketing centres of the border area there are a large number of Bengali Hindus who dominate the bulk of the trade in the border areas.

2.9 Occupation.—The greater portion of the population of the district subsists on cultivation. More than 75 percent of the rural households are predominantly agricultural. The industrious Khasi agriculturists males and females have a high regard for hard labour

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144 'ETHNOLOGY.—In order to determine the ethnological position of the Khásis we must dwell upon a few only of their physical characteristics, viz. those which are held to indicate that type of the human family, the Mongolian, to which they undoubtedly belong. A detailed description of their physiognomy would embrace forms and characters by no means common even to tribes occupying the hills in close proximity to them, much less admissible to all branches of the Mongolian stock. These differences in detail, which may be attributed mainly to local influences, render it extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to trace out the exact relation which these mountain tribes bear to each other. But the Mongolian, or to use a more comprehensive term, the Turanian, physiognomy is unmistakable in them all—Khásis, Jaintás, Gáros, Mikirs, Nágás, Manipuris, etc. The chief points may be briefly stated as follows:—

• 142 [141] [302] Colour tawny or yellow, though a darker hue is not entirely unknown; nose somewhat depressed, with a peculiar conformation towards the forehead at the glabellum, which is very flat and broad; face broad, flat, and squarish, with high and rounded cheek bones; skull globular rather than square; eyes middle-sized and black, with a yellow tinge in the eyeball; eyelids obliquely set, but less acutely than in the Chinese and other Indo-Chinese races; mouth large, with prominent though not very thick lips; hair black, thick, and worn long, the orthodox style being to tie it up in a knot at the back, varying little with sex; beard remarkably sparse, but the moustache more abundant than the beard. The lower classes go bare-headed; stature low in the majority of cases; constitution strong and robust; limbs thick, short, and stout; trunk long in proportion and very broad at the waist; calves over-developed, but this is considered an element of beauty, more especially in the women, who, on the average, are fairer and handsomer than the men; carriage ungraceful.

141 [826] 157 'SOCIAL AND MORAL QUALITIES.—Disposition very affable, gentle, and cheerful; rather industrious, but devoid of ingenuity and mechanical skill. In the industrial arts, such as masonry, carpentry, 291 and agriculture, they are amenable to training. Dress amongst the lower classes is confined to a fringed jacket rudely woven of hemp, extending down as far as the thighs, and leaving the arms bare, together with a scanty covering for the loins. The more respectable classes wear a turban of coarse cotton or silk for a head-dress, and a sheet of silk thrown loosely over the shoulders, together with a long